United Nations A/57/475

General Assembly

Distr.: General
15 October 2002

Original: English

Fifty-seventh session
Agenda item 22 (p)
Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum

Report of the Secretary-General*

Summary

The present report, the first submitted under the item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum", outlines the progress achieved in enhancing the relationship between the two organizations, including their secretariats.

As requested by the General Assembly in paragraph 7 of its resolution 56/41 of 7 December 2001, the report describes cooperation in the areas of conflict prevention, peace and security. This cooperation, based on the United Nations Millennium Declaration and the Biketawa Declaration, is aimed at assisting the efforts by the Forum and its member States to address the existing and new security threats in the region. The report also presents an account of various activities pursued by the specialized agencies and other organizations and programmes of the United Nations system with the Forum on economic, social, environmental and other issues.

The view is expressed that there is considerable scope for broadening and deepening cooperation in such areas as good governance, human and indigenous rights, support of democratic processes and the rule of law in the region. As far as conflict prevention and peace-building is concerned, it is considered that joint assessment missions, election and peace monitoring, as well as training, should be explored. It is also recommended that the secretariats of the two organizations develop their contacts along more structured, regular and transparent lines.

* The report was submitted on 15 October 2002 in order to reflect to the extent possible relevant developments and activities.

02-64297 (E) 121102

I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, by resolution 56/41 of 7 December 2001 invited the Secretary-General of the United Nations, in consultation with the Secretary-General of the Pacific Islands Forum, to take the necessary measures to promote and expand cooperation and coordination between the two secretariats in order to increase the capacity of the organizations to attain their common objectives, requested the Secretary-General to promote, as a matter of priority, meetings between their representatives for consultations on policies, projects and procedures that would facilitate, broaden and, if necessary, formalize, cooperation and coordination between the two organizations; and called upon the Secretary-General to assist in the development of long-term peace-building programmes to address new security threats in the Pacific Islands Forum region. As reflected in the United Nations Millennium Declaration (see Assembly resolution 55/2) and the landmark Biketawa Declaration[1] and other documents adopted by the Pacific Islands Forum, there are certainly a wide range of issues where cooperation between our two organizations could be enhanced, both in the political and security areas on the one hand, and in regard to social, environmental and developmental issues on the other.

2. The General Assembly, by the same resolution, also urged specialized agencies and other organizations and programmes of the United Nations system to cooperate with the Secretary-General of the United Nations in order to initiate, maintain and increase consultations and programmes with the Pacific Islands Forum and its associated institutions in the attainment of their objectives. In addition, it invited initiatives from Member States to assist in the cooperation efforts between the United Nations and the Forum.

3. Further, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to it at its fifty-seventh session a report on the implementation of resolution 56/41. The present report is submitted in response to that request.

II. Cooperation in the area of conflict prevention, peace and security

A. Cooperation between the United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum

4. Over the past two years, meaningful progress has been achieved in expanding contacts and the exchange of relevant information between the United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum in the area of conflict prevention and peace-building. In February 2001, for the first time, the Secretary-General of the Forum secretariat participated in the fourth high-level meeting between the United Nations and regional organizations, which had as its theme "Cooperation for conflict prevention and peace-building". The meeting elaborated, among other things, common conceptual approaches to peace-building and possible objectives and principles of cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations. A meeting was held at the working level between the United Nations and regional organizations from 30 April to 2 May 2002, to discuss the modalities for cooperation in the field of conflict prevention and peace-building identified at the fourth high-level meeting. Essentially, it sought to deepen cooperation by identifying common areas of activity,

exploring possibilities for joint action, and facilitating more systematic and frequent interaction between the United Nations and regional organizations. The representative of the Forum secretariat participated in that meeting.

5. In 1999, for the first time, the United Nations Secretariat was represented at the formal session of the Forum summit meeting, held in Palau. In 2001 and 2002 officials from the Department of Political Affairs attended the opening sessions of the summit meetings held in Nauru and Fiji, respectively. The 2002 summit meeting in Fiji provided an opportunity for the United Nations Secretariat to hold fruitful consultations with the Secretary-General of the Forum and his staff on the implementation of Assembly resolution 56/41. The representative of the Secretary-General also held consultations with officials of the host country and various delegations on different aspects of conflict prevention and peace-building in the region. In 2001 and 2002, the Forum secretariat invited United Nations Secretariat officials to take part as observers in the Forum Regional Security Committee. The Committee focuses on a wide range of security issues of concern to the region including, in particular, those relating to drug trafficking, money-laundering, people smuggling, and the implementation of the Biketawa Declaration which outlines principles, guidelines and responses to potential conflicts and crisis situations in the region.

6. The Forum secretariat has been included in the roster of organizations to be invited to participate in training courses on early warning and preventive measures that may be organized under the auspices of the United Nations Staff College. In the area of post-conflict peace-building, the Department of Political Affairs has, since the establishment of the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville, Papua New Guinea, on 1 August 1998, worked closely with States Members of the Forum providing troops to the Peace Monitoring Group on the implementation of the ceasefire agreements and the Bougainville Peace Agreement. Forum officials have been updated on the progress made in the Bougainville peace process and weapons disposal, and on the work of the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville in those areas. In the area of electoral assistance, the United Nations Secretariat deployed the United Nations Fijian Observation Mission in Fiji in September 2001, and the Expert Election Monitoring Team, in the Solomon Islands in December 2001. In its activities, the latter interacted with international observers, including those deployed for the first time by the Pacific Islands Forum.

B. Cooperation between Member States and the Pacific Islands Forum

7. Replies were received from two Member States, Australia and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, in response to a note verbale sent to all Member States in implementation of paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 56/41.

8. Australia, in its reply, noted that it actively encourages cooperation between the United Nations and the Forum secretariat, and that increased cooperation within current fiscal parameters would increase the capacities of both organizations' to attain their common objectives. It strongly supports the representation of the Forum secretariat at the regular sessions of the General Assembly and at other meetings, such as the fourth high-level meeting between the United Nations and regional

organizations, on peace-building, the Commission for Sustainable Development and the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

9. In response to new regional security threats, Australia has provided training to counter the illegal trade and use of small arms and promote increased compliance with the 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. More recently, the Australian Government, together with the Forum secretariat, the United States of America and New Zealand, co-hosted a workshop to assist the Pacific Island countries with the implementation of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), the recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force on money-laundering and terrorist financing, and the 12 key international instruments aimed at combating terrorism.

10. The United Kingdom, in its reply, said it was supporting projects in such sectors as judicial reform, good governance, human rights, conflict prevention and the environment. For example, it had recently committed £ stg. 100,000 to an electoral assistance project of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Fiji; contributed to a weapons disposal project in Bougainville; and supported the development of the judiciary in the Solomon Islands. The United Kingdom had participated in a number of programmes with the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme based in Samoa. It also had close ties with a number of States members of the Forum through common membership of the Commonwealth, and tried to promote the needs and priorities of those States in international forums. The United Kingdom had also provided assistance to the members of the Forum through its contribution to the international development programmes of the European Union.

III. Cooperation between specialized agencies and other organizations and the Pacific Islands Forum in economic, social, environmental and other fields

11. The following specialized agencies, programmes and organizations of the United Nations system and related organizations responded to the note verbale drawing their attention to Assembly resolution 56/41: Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Organization, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, International Civil Aviation Organization, International Labour Organization, International Monetary Fund, International Maritime Organization, United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, International Telecommunication Union, Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, United Nations Population Fund, United Nations Human Settlements Programme, United Nations Industrial Development Organization, United Nations Institute for Training and Research, United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention, Universal Postal Union, United Nations University, World Intellectual Property Organization, World Food Programme and World Trade Organization. Below is a brief summary of the information provided by the specialized agencies and United Nations bodies on their ongoing and planned activities with the Pacific

Islands Forum or its associated institutions in the economic, social, environmental and other fields.

A. United Nations Development Programme

12. The Forum secretariat is a key regional organization and development partner for UNDP. Conscious efforts have been made to improve collaboration between UNDP and the Forum on two fronts, through the informal consultations held on a regular basis and programme and thematic-based collaboration. Consultative meetings are held at the management level as the need arises to share information and also discuss a variety of issues of common concern, for example, the recommendations of the annual Forum Economic Ministers Meeting and other ministerial meetings, where UNDP can be of assistance. More formally, the most significant consultation occurs through the annual meetings of the Pacific Island countries and their development partners, which are coordinated by the Forum secretariat and held immediately after the meeting of the economic ministers, and in which UNDP is each year invited to participate as an observer. UNDP has also held consultations with the Forum secretariat on a range of other issues, including HIV/AIDS, the environment, coordination of input from the meetings of the Pacific Island countries and their development partners, follow-up of global conventions, and information and communication technology for development.

13. UNDP and the Forum secretariat, which in the past has been the cooperating agency for several UNDP regional projects on industrial development and training, import management, energy and private sector development, continue to collaborate on a number of initiatives. These include input by Forum officials in the formulation of UNDP subregional programmes, and representation of the Forum secretariat at governance workshops and meetings organized or supported by UNDP. UNDP is now invited and participates in meetings of the Council of Regional Organizations in the Pacific that are organized by the Forum secretariat, for example, meetings on information technology, health and energy. UNDP is also represented on the Forum secretariat's regional reference group for the design process of the regional basic education project, which is set to commence in 2003. UNDP, through its subregional governance programme, has worked with the Forum secretariat to support the island member countries of the Forum in the implementation of the Forum's eight principles of accountability. It has helped with stocktaking surveys and national workshops, in which both UNDP project staff and Forum secretariat staff have worked together. As a follow-up to the Pacific Parliamentarians Conference, UNDP, with the participation and full support of the management of the Forum secretariat, organized a Pacific Islands Speakers Forum in Tonga in April 2000. It supported the convening of the second such meeting in the Marshall Islands in 2002, which saw UNDP handover the Speakers Forum, now known as the Forum Presiding Officers Conference, to the Forum secretariat. UNDP, together with the International Labour Organization and the Forum secretariat, organized a social development workshop in February 2002 to help train relevant officials on required follow-up to various global commitments, including reporting on progress made towards achieving the goals set forth in the United Nations Millennium Declaration. A joint workshop on the millennium development goals is being planned for the first quarter of 2003, and is expected to be followed by in-country workshops and joint reporting activities on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration. Through this mechanism, UNDP

and the Forum secretariat are looking at the possibility of reporting on a regional basis.

14. In March 2002, UNDP, the Commonwealth Secretariat, and the Forum secretariat organized a regional workshop on leadership codes for Forum members at Nadi, Fiji, which provided an opportunity for Forum members to discuss the drafting and implementation of leadership codes and how the region might best proceed on a regional and national basis. At the end of the workshop, organizers were asked to develop for consideration by Forum leaders in 2003 a model leadership code for small States which would draw on the experience of members and take into account the traditional Pacific Island values and Forum leaders' commitment to the Biketawa Declaration.

B. International Monetary Fund

15. Cooperation between the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Pacific Islands Forum takes place mainly in the context of the annual Forum Economic Ministers Meetings to which the Asia and the Pacific Department of IMF is regularly invited. Recently, its Legal Department cooperated closely with the Forum secretariat in support of the creation of anti-money-laundering legislation and the establishment of frameworks for financial intelligence units in the Pacific. In this context, the Legal Department makes technical assistance available to the Forum secretariat and a number of Pacific island countries.

16. There is also frequent and close cooperation in the areas of public financial management, tax and customs administration and policy, prudential regulation and supervision, and economic and financial statistics between IMF and the Forum, through the Pacific Financial Technical Assistance Centre, located at Suva, for which IMF is the executing agency and provides from its staff the project coordinator. Since 1996, advisers from the Centre have conducted some 270 missions to member States of the Forum, organized conferences and seminars, several of which were held at the ministerial level, and arranged for some 60 training attachments of Pacific Island officials to governmental economic agencies in the region. Support provided by the technical assistance departments of IMF and feedback from its Asia and Pacific Department buttress the advice and assistance provided by the Centre in various areas, such as the promotion of the IMF Code of Good Practices on Fiscal Transparency as a model for the region, increased attention to sound financial sector management and adequate prudential regulation and supervision, and commitments by Pacific Island countries to strengthen their statistical institutions and systems within the framework of the IMF General Data Dissemination System.

C. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

17. Since 2000, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has supported the Pacific Islands Forum in delivering technical assistance to several of its member States. In 2001, its secretariat, in close cooperation with that of the Forum, hosted a regional workshop on the constraints, challenges and prospects for commodity-based development and diversification in the Pacific Island economies. UNCTAD also assisted the Forum in designing

regional legislation on intellectual property rights associated with biodiversity. Further support activities are envisaged in the area of trade policy, with a national trade policy review exercise and policy advice to African, Caribbean and Pacific States, in the context of the preparations for their economic partnership agreement with the European Union.

D. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

18. Besides direct assistance to Members from the region through its technical cooperation programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) convenes annually a round-table meeting for Pacific Island countries on the provisions of World Trade Organization (WTO) agreements, in support of the role of the Pacific Islands Forum as the coordinator of WTO activities in the region. The fifth meeting in the series was held in Wellington, in April 2002. FAO experts have also given considerable assistance and provided technical input to the work of the Forum, as well as to related and associated organizations, such as the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme and the South Pacific Community through training, workshops and missions sponsored by the Forum. A meeting between the FAO Subregional Office for the Pacific Islands and experts of the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme is held annually to identify areas of collaboration and partnership. FAO collaborates extensively with the South Pacific Community in the areas of forestry (legislation), nutrition (food safety), statistics, livestock (information dissemination and training), plant protection (quarantine, pest analysis, integrated pest management, dissemination of pesticides information) and fisheries (in particular, aquaculture, management, statistics, marketing and quality control for fish exports). A similar partnership has been established with the University of the South Pacific, the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission and the Forum Fisheries Agency.

E. International Labour Organization

19. The collaboration between the Pacific Islands Forum and the Suva office of the International Labour Organization (ILO) has been continuing in the form of both formal and informal consultations, as well as technical cooperation programmes. At the invitation of ILO, the Forum participated in a dialogue with other social partners and civil society organizations to promote country programmes, including the Integrated Human Resources Development Programme for Employment Promotion, Fiji. Recently, ILO and the Forum, under the UNDP and ILO project on the *Pacific Human Development Report*, worked together on a regional social development workshop, which was organized for 14 member countries of the Forum in order to identify the support needed to incorporate the social development agenda into their economic planning and implementation. The implementation of the millennium declaration goals was an integral part of the workshop, for which ILO provided technical assistance. In the area of gender and development, ILO participated in the work of the gender working group that is being facilitated by the Forum. To provide an opportunity for policy makers to hear the views of other stakeholders on economic and social issues, the Forum is invited to ILO informal monthly "decent work" meetings, at which issues of global, subregional and national interest are discussed.

F. United Nations Population Fund Subregional Office

20. The Subregional Office of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Suva works in close collaboration and consultation with the secretariat of the Pacific Islands Forum and has been an active member of the Council of Regional Organizations in the Pacific. To support the Council's initiative of setting up a regional database with UNFPA as lead agency, UNFPA intends to incorporate the activity in its third programme cycle. Further, in preparation for the development of its assistance to the Pacific under that cycle, it conducted a regional strategy development meeting in March 2002.

G. United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention

21. There has been close cooperation between the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) and the secretariat of the Pacific Islands Forum in providing legal assistance to States members of the Forum in implementing international drug control conventions. This has included assistance in legislative drafting, such as the UNDCP model legislation which is to be used by a number of members to upgrade their domestic laws. There is also an upcoming pilot project on computer-based training, which is sponsored by the Australian Federal Police and is to be delivered before the end of 2002. In the context of this project, UNDCP will set up a small learning resource centre, provide a small number of computers, install specific software, provide training to a manager of the project and assist in the evaluation of the project.

H. Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS

22. To strengthen its cooperation with the Pacific Islands Forum, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) is intensifying its effort to increase consultations and programmes through three theme groups, based in Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Samoa, covering the whole Pacific Island region. It has created a post of Country Programme Adviser in Papua New Guinea and facilitated the funding by Australia and New Zealand of the post of Programme Coordinator in Fiji. In August 2002, UNAIDS launched the Asia Pacific Leadership Forum on HIV/AIDS and Development, with the support of Australia, the Department for International Development (United Kingdom) and Japan.

I. United Nations Human Settlements Programme

23. The regional office of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) for Asia and the Pacific, based in Japan, will be increasing its consultation with the secretariat of the Pacific Islands Forum on: (a) the Safer Port Moresby initiative in Papua New Guinea, to which it will provide technical assistance to build capacity and city-wide partnerships for crime prevention; (b) the launch of the campaign on good local governance, aimed at promoting policy dialogue at the national and city levels, with a view to reaching agreement on locally relevant principles and practices of good local governance; and (c) the appointment in early 2003 of a Habitat Agenda focal point, based in Fiji, to assist members of the

Forum in mainstreaming the implementation of the Habitat Agenda and, in close consultation with the Forum, coordinating issues in the area of shelter and sustainable urbanization policy and the formulation of strategies, programmes and budgets.

J. World Health Organization

24. The World Health Organization (WHO) indirectly collaborates with the Pacific Islands Forum through the Council of Regional Organizations in the Pacific, the South Pacific Community, the University of the South Pacific and the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme. The South Pacific Community is directly involved in the WHO Pacific tuberculosis training course and the training in pre- and post-test HIV counselling in the Cook Islands. It has also provided technical input into the Pacific health leadership and management development pilot programme.

K. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

25. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), through its Office for the Pacific at Apia, has had a cooperative relationship with the Pacific Islands Forum since it was established in 1984. It will continue to monitor the special needs of the small island developing Pacific States, as specified in its medium-term strategy for 2002-2007 and as a follow-up to Focus on the Pacific initiative (1997), which emphasized the need to assist such States and other island groupings in determining their own agenda for human security and sustainable development. The UNESCO Office at Apia presented two papers to the first meeting of education officials, convened by the Forum in 2000, the results of which were submitted to the ministers of education and led to the adoption of a Pacific Education Plan. A project design, funded by the Department for International Development (United Kingdom), is currently being developed. It has been suggested that the UNESCO Office at Apia be involved again, once the implementation of this project begins.

L. International Civil Aviation Organization

26. The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) has been involved in consultations with the Pacific Islands Forum on two programmes. Under its cooperative airspace management programme, it is assisting in conducting a study and developing a mechanism for an equitable sharing of revenues from user charges between island States in accordance with the ICAO Policies on Charges for Airports and Air Navigation Services. To enhance the safety and efficiency of air transport operations in the region, the Pacific Aviation Safety Office is in the process of being established, after close consultation between the Forum and ICAO.

M. International Maritime Organization

27. The International Maritime Organization (IMO) maintains good working relations with the South Pacific Commission (SPC) in the area of maritime and

training matters, and the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) in marine environment protection activities. Since 1996, IMO has developed 10 joint regional projects with the two organizations and provided financial and technical support for their implementation. Through the joint efforts of IMO and SPREP, some 70 people from the region have been trained on oil-spill response management and operation; regional model marine pollution legislation has been developed for adoption by the Pacific Island countries; demand by the region for waste reception facilities has been assessed; and a harbour environmental management plan has been prepared for a pilot site in the region.

28. In order to further promote the implementation of ILO technical cooperation activities at the regional level, IMO and SPC in February 2002, signed an agreement to delegate more implementation responsibilities to the region. Under a joint project, which will continue into 2003, two consultants on codes and the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System were recruited, regional workshops were held in Fiji in February 2002, and other activities were planned, including the recruitment of a consultant to finalize the South Pacific Maritime Code and the purchase of some IMO publications for the Pacific Island countries with the aim of assisting them in implementing international regulations and the new Code. A new regional programme was started in April 2002, aimed at enhancing the skills of local port control surveyors and to develop a regional strategy to deal with emerging issues of ship/port interface in the region. In cooperation with SPC, IMO is organizing a regional seminar in Fiji in November 2002, under its programme on the education and training of fishing vessel personnel in the operational safety of fishing vessels.

N. International Telecommunication Union

29. Within the framework of section 10 (e) of the Pacific Islands Forum's Communication Action Plan, which encourages the creation of policy and regulatory environments favourable to the development of the Pacific information economy, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Development Bureau is currently involved in a number of projects in the Pacific, which include: (a) Pacific governance (policy and regulation) in 14 countries (2002-2003); (b) Kiribati, special programme for the least developed countries (2002); (c) Marshall Islands, financial policy and regulation (2001-2002); and (d) joint workshop with the Pacific Island Telecommunications Association, on costing and pricing (Suva, July 2002). During the current year, the ITU Development Bureau has received preliminary requests for assistance in: (a) Niue (network plan); (b) Marshall Islands (network plan — part of infrastructure planning); and (c) Tonga (international settlements). One of the Bureau's major projects in the Pacific for 2002 and into 2003 is the Pacific governance project. This project is undertaken in collaboration with the Pacific Islands Forum secretariat, the Pacific Islands Telecommunication Association, UNDP, the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity and the Government of Australia.

O. World Intellectual Property Organization

30. The longstanding cooperation of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) with Pacific Islands Forum States extends beyond the four Pacific countries (Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa and Tonga) that are members of the organization. Since the 1980s, WIPO has organized a number of high-level meetings of

intellectual property officials of all Pacific Islands Forum States to enable them to keep abreast of the most recent developments in the field of intellectual property, and to avail themselves of WIPO expertise on issues of special concern to them. This cooperation was greatly enhanced in 2001 with the commencement of a three-year regional focused action plan for intellectual property development, aimed at modernizing intellectual property legislation and administration systems, enhancing public awareness of intellectual property issues and promoting regional collaboration in certain fields of intellectual property, to be jointly implemented by the Pacific Islands Forum secretariat, WIPO and the Government of Australia.

P. Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization

31. The Pacific Islands Forum supports the prohibition of nuclear testing and, since 1998, its relations with the Forum secretariat and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization have steadily developed. Of the 16 States members of the Pacific Islands Forum, 12 have signed and 6 have ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. A delegation from the Preparatory Committee conducted a seminar for members of the Forum in New Zealand in March 2001, on the margins of the United Nations Regional Disarmament Meeting in Asia and the Pacific. A delegation from the Preparatory Commission participated in the thirty-second session of the Forum, held in Nauru in August 2001. The delegation also held consultations with some Forum member countries. The Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission met the Secretary-General of the Pacific Islands Forum at Suva in April 2002 to discuss a project for an international cooperation workshop for the Pacific Islands in 2003. Representatives of Forum members also assisted and participated in the Preparatory Commission's training and its international cooperation programmes.

IV. Observations

32. **The Secretary-General warmly welcomes the decision of the heads of Government of the Pacific Islands Forum to pursue a closer relationship between the United Nations and the Forum by proposing, for the first time inclusion of the item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum" in the agenda of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. The present report shows that cooperation between the United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum has been growing steadily in recent years. At the same time, it is also evident that there is much scope for this cooperation to be broadened and deepened in such areas as good governance, human and indigenous rights, support of democratic processes and the rule of law, as encompassed in the Biketawa Declaration. There are also good prospects, in the view of the Secretary-General, for developing cooperative and complementary activities between our two organizations in conflict prevention and peace-building, an area highlighted by the Biketawa Declaration, which entrusts the Forum secretariat with playing the lead role in coordinating regional efforts aimed at averting, containing and resolving conflicts by peaceful means, including customary practices. The United Nations has experience and expertise, gained through its field presences in the Pacific and**

elsewhere, which could be beneficially shared with the Forum. Joint assessment missions, election and peace monitoring, training — these are some areas in which our cooperation should be carefully explored and gainfully implemented. To this end, further consultations should be undertaken by the secretariats of the two organizations with a view to developing our contacts in a more structured, regular and transparent manner. These consultations will require the support of Member States, including the provision of adequate resources for such activities. Progress made in these areas will create an environment that is conducive to the achievement of the goals of the Millennium Declaration and of the objectives of the International Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

Notes

[1] Adopted at the thirty-first Pacific Islands Forum in Kiribati.